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Message Text

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16
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-04 IO-04 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-05 L-01 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-05 /067 W
---------- 125250
R 251640Z OCT 74
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5139
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
CINCUSNAVEUR
USLOSACLANT
USNMR SHAPE
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS
USCINCEUR

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CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY
CINCEUR FOR POLAD
NAIROBI FOR HAVERKAMP

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, SF, UK
SUBJECT: HMG ROW OVER CAPE TOWN PORT CALL

SUMMARY - PUBLIC RELATIONS HANDLING OF CAPE TOWN PORT CALL HAS ACUTELY EMBARRASSED LABOR GOVERNMENT AND PRODUCED MAJOR ROW IN CABINET. NET RESULT WILL BE INCREASED PRESSURE FOR ABROGATION OF SIMONSTOWN AGREEMENT. END SUMMARY

1. THE LABOR GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN ACUTELY EMBARRASSED
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BY THE PUBLICITY GIVEN TO THE JOINT UK/SOUTH AFRICAN

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NAVAL EXERCISE JUST CONCLUDED, AND TO THE RELATED PORT CALL AT CAPE TOWN BY A ROYAL NAVY TASK FORCE. FOREIGN SECRETARY CALLAGHAN IS FURIOUS THAT WHAT HE THOUGHT WAS GOING TO BE A STRICTLY OPERATIONAL VISIT HAS BEEN MADE TO LOOK LIKE A GOODWILL VISIT. FCO SOURCES HAVE HINTED THAT THE COMMANDING BRITISH ADMIRAL EXCEEDED HIS WRIT AND SHOWED POOR POLITICAL JUDGMENT. THEY HAVE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT DEFENCE SECRETARY MASON EXERCISES INSUFFICIENT CONTROL OVER HIS MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT. CALLAGHAN APOLOGIZED TO MASON AT A CABINET MEETING OCTOBER 24 FOR THESE ALLEGATIONS, BUT FEELINGS BETWEEN THE FCO AND THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE REMAIN SCRATCHY.

2. LEFT-WING LABOR MPS JOINED BY MANY MODERATES ARE OUTRAGED OVER THE AFFAIR AND ARE PLANNING TO RAISE IT IN THE PARLIAMENTARY LABOR PARTY AND ON THE FLOOR OF THE COMMONS AS SOON AS PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLES NEXT WEEK. PARTLY TO NIP THIS REVOLT IN THE BUD AND PARTLY TO RE-ESTABLISH HIS CREDENTIALS WITH THE BLACK AFRICAN STATES (SEVERAL OF WHICH HE HOPES TO VISIT EARLY IN 1975), CALLAGHAN WILL MAKE A MAJOR POLICY SPEECH IN CARDIFF TONIGHT (OCT. 25), IN WHICH HE IS EXPECTED TO CONDEMN APARTHEID IN STRONGEST LANGUAGE.

3. COMMENT: BRITISH POLICY TOWARDS AFRICA IS CURRENTLY UNDER REVIEW. VARIOUS INFLUENTIAL POLITICAL FORCES (NOT JUST LEFT-WING) ARE PRESSING FOR ABROGATION OF THE SIMONSTOWN AGREEMENT. THEIR ARGUMENTS HAVE BEEN IMMEASURABLY STRENGTHENED BY THE CURRENT FUROR. IF, AS THE BRITISH PRESS ALLEGE, THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT TURNED A ROUTINE NAVAL VISIT INTO A PROPAGANDA EXERCISE, IT MAY PROVE A COSTLY SHORT-TERM GAIN.

ANNENBERG

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